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THE EPISTOLA APOSTOLORUM

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IN 1895 there appeared in the Proceedings of the Royal Prussian Academy an account of *Eine bisher unbekannte altchristliche Schrift in koptischer Sprache*,¹ by Carl Schmidt, at that time a scholar of the German Imperial Archaeological Institute in Egypt. Schmidt was helped in further research on this document by Pierre Lacau, the Egyptologist, but a full publication was delayed in the hope of further knowledge. This has come, slowly but satisfactorily from new discoveries and the friendly coöperation of French, English, and German scholars.

The first step was the discovery in Vienna, by Dr. Bick, the librarian, of a palimpsest, originally from Bobbio, of a Latin version of the same document.² Schmidt then determined to publish the Coptic text, and in 1910 this had already been printed, when the present Provost of Eton, Montague Rhodes James, noticed an article by the Abbé Guerrier in the *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, entitled, "*Un testament (éthiopien) de Notre Seigneur et Sauveur Jésus Christ en Galilée.*" He wrote to Schmidt, who in turn corresponded with Guerrier, and it was found that this Ethiopic document, which Dillmann had known but not thought worth publication, was identical with the Coptic apocryph. Schmidt once more delayed his publication until Guerrier was ready, and it was not until 1913 that Guerrier published the text, with a French translation, in the *Patrologia Orientalis* of Graffin and Nau.³

Finally in 1919⁴ Schmidt published in volume xliii of the

¹ Sitzungsbericht der phil.-hist. Classe vom 20 Juni, 1895.

² Wiener Palimpseste, I. Teil. Cod. Palat. Vindobonensis 16, olim Bobbiensis (Sitzungsber. d. k. Akad. d. Wissensch. in Wien, phil.-hist. Klasse, Band clix, 7 Abteil.), and Hauler, Wiener Studien, 1908, Bd. xxx, pp. 308 ff.

³ Vol. ix, part 3. Le testament en Galilée de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ.

⁴ Owing to the excellence of the international mail, it reached America in the following year.

*Texte und Untersuchungen*⁵ a parallel translation of the *Epistola* from Coptic and Ethiopic, with full discussions of all the questions connected with it, and three remarkable appendices on "Cerinthus and the Alogi," the "Descensus ad Inferos," and the "Celebration of Easter in the Church of Asia Minor." To these appendices reference must be made in a later article. His edition is of first rate importance, worthy of a document comparable with the *Didache* or the *Odes of Solomon* for its additions to our knowledge of the second century. It must suffice for the present to give an account of the *Epistola* itself and its chief problems, but I cannot refrain from quoting the dignified and touching conclusion of Schmidt's preface.

Wenn ich zum Schluss meinem Werke noch ein Geleitwort auf den Weg geben darf, so möchte ich darauf hinweisen, dass es, wie das Titelblatt zeigt, ein Dokument der angeregten internationalen Cooperation vor dem Völkerrkriege bildet. Ich durfte mich der Mitarbeit des Aegyptologen Pierre Lacau, des heutigen Generaldirektors der ägyptischen Museen, erfreuen und zu ebenso grossem Danke bin ich und die Wissenschaft dem Abbé Guerrier verpflichtet, der den äthiopischen Text aus der Verborgenheit gezogen und dadurch eine umfassende Untersuchung des lückenhaft erhaltenen koptischen Textes ermöglicht hat. Wahrscheinlich wäre mir diese Publikation entgangen oder wenigstens zu spät in meine Hände gelangt, wenn nicht Herr Montague Rhodes James mich in liebenswürdiger Weise auf einen Artikel von Herrn Guerrier aufmerksam gemacht hätte. So konnte Herr Dr. Wajnberg aus Warschau eine erneute Uebersetzung des äthiopischen Textes vorlegen, und auf der anderen Seite haben die Wiener Gelehrten Bick und Hauler ein lateinisches Palimpsestfragment beige-steuert. Niemals hätte also die vorliegende Publikation ohne jene tatkräftige Unterstützung dieser auswärtigen Gelehrten diejenige Gestalt erhalten, in der ich sie heute der gelehrten Welt vorlegen kann. Die Fäden, welche uns mit der westeuropäischen Wissenschaft verbanden, sind seit fünf Jahren abgerissen, aber ich kann die Hoffnung nicht aufgeben dass dieses Band doch wieder einmal angeknüpft wird. In dieser Aussicht wage ich mein Werk der internationalen Wissenschaft zu überreichen und ihrem Urtheile zu unterbreiten."

Guerrier's publication had never attracted much attention; partly because it was unaccompanied by any introduction indicating its importance, but chiefly because its title was misleading and its contents composite. The title "Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" implies some connection

⁵ The title is *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern nach der Auferstehung, ein katholisch-apostolisches Sendschreiben des 2ten Jahrhunderts*; but in the body of the book Schmidt always speaks of the document as the *Epistola Apostolorum*.

with the *Testamentum Domini* of Rahmani; but the opening chapters dissipate this notion, for they contain merely an apocalypse, important mainly for its delineation of Antichrist. Guerrier seems to have been ignorant of Schmidt's preliminary notice in the Berlin *Sitzungsberichte*. Probably only the interest of M. R. James in the Antichrist led him to notice the book and read it through, and discover that in the middle its character suddenly changed.

Schmidt has now shown beyond all doubt that the title "Testament of the Lord" was taken from the ordinary book of that name, which was accidentally associated with the other document in the Ethiopic copy. He has also shown — what is self-evident when it is pointed out — that the first eleven chapters of Guerrier's document have nothing in common with the remainder of it, which contains an *Epistola Apostolorum* identical with the Coptic document. The Coptic is an incomplete manuscript of a better text, while the Ethiopic is a complete manuscript of a worse text. Both are based, directly or indirectly, on a lost Greek original from which the Latin palimpsest, unfortunately only a small fragment, was also derived.

The *Epistola Apostolorum* begins by describing how the apostles determined, in order to confute Simon and Cerinthus, to write an account of their preaching concerning Jesus Christ. They therefore proceed to give a short account of their general doctrine, of which the centre is the Incarnation of the Logos, and summarize it as consisting of five points: the belief in the Father, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Church, and in the Forgiveness of Sins. Cerinthus and Simon have corrupted this message, apparently by denying the truth of the death of Christ; and the apostles therefore emphasize the facts of the Passion, the Death, and the Resurrection, ending with the appearance of the risen Lord, and passing into an account of the special revelation which he made to them in the days before the Ascension.

This special revelation begins with what may perhaps be called the preliminaries of the Incarnation. It describes the

descent of Jesus through the various heavens, attended by the great Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, until the fifth heaven, and finally he appeared in the form of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary and so became incarnate. This is so similar to the Ascension of Isaiah that it seems to me probable that there is some literary connection between the two.

There then seems to be a break in the sense; but Schmidt does not notice it, and it is true that if anything is missing from the text it must have been lost very early, as there is no difference between the Ethiopic and the Coptic. The words of Jesus pass without a break from the account of the Incarnation to the institution of the Easter Eucharist, which seems to be regarded as the perpetuation of the Passover to be commemorated until the Second Advent. But the interpretation of this passage is difficult. "Must we still drink the cup of the Passover?" ask the disciples. "Yes," replies the Lord, "until I come again." The mention of the Passover suggests an annual celebration, but the reference to the second coming reminds us of the Eucharist in Corinthians. Does the *Epistola* describe the connection with the Paschal feast of an already instituted eucharistic meal, or the institution of this meal at the time of the Passover as a commemoration of the death of Christ? Schmidt thinks it is the former, and connects it with the Quarta-deciman question; but even if he is right in this connection (and I think that he is), the question might well be argued whether there is not here an indication of an early usage which had an eucharist once a year. The turning point in the problem may prove to be the meaning of the word *agape*, which in the Ethiopic seems to be identical with the commemorative feast, but in the Coptic to be separate from it. Might not Schmidt have profitably given more attention to Batiffol's study of the *Agape*? Perhaps the time will soon be ripe to reopen this question.

The disciples then ask questions about the second advent, and are told that the Lord will return as the rising sun, brighter by seven times than the sun in his glory; he will be borne on the clouds of heaven, and the sign of the cross will go before

him. With him will come the martyrs, and he will judge the living and the dead. This will happen between Passover and Pentecost, a hundred and twenty years later, or, according to the Ethiopic, a hundred and fifty years.

The apostles then raise a question of much interest to the historian of doctrine: Will he who shall come at the Judgment be the Lord Jesus or he who sent him? The answer of Jesus is an affirmation of the identity of himself with his Father in a manner strongly reminiscent of the lamentable heresy of Sabellius, but it contains also an obscure reference to the Ogdoad, if, at least, Schmidt's rendering be correct.⁶ This is an obvious point of connection with some of the systems of thought loosely called Gnostic — a term which has wrought more confusion of thought in our time than the systems so described raised controversy in the days of the Fathers. Schmidt argues here, much as he did formerly in his *Alte Petrusakten*, that a belief in ogdoads and dodecads was not necessarily excluded from orthodox thought in the second century. Heresy in that happy period was found in opinions, not so much on the constitution of the divine sphere of influence in heaven, as on the relation between God and the world. To believe that heaven or even the fulness of divine being was divided into three, seven, eight, or twelve was not important; what was decisive was the question whether creation was due to the good will of a supreme God who called for the coöperation of his creatures, or to the incompetence of an inferior one, to escape from whose inadequacy was salvation and life.

Jesus then gives the new commandment that "they shall love one another and obey one another in order that peace may be among them. Love your enemies and what you do not wish should be done to you, do not so to others." This is to be the substance of the preaching of the apostles; they are to teach it to believers and to preach the kingdom of his Father, and how the Father has given him authority in order to bring together his children.

He next promises the disciples a rest, where there is neither eating nor drinking, lamentation nor trouble, and they will

⁶ The only reason for doubting this is that the manuscript appears to be defective.

be companions not of the earthly creation, but of that of the Father which is incorruptible; as the Christ is ever in his Father, so will they be ever in him. Moreover this eternal life relates also to the flesh, for just as the divine Logos became flesh, so the flesh of humanity will become divine.⁷ It will be raised up at the Resurrection in order that it, as well as the soul, may receive the due recompense for its deeds. At the Judgment the Lord will spare neither rich nor poor, and will treat each according to his deeds, but those who have loved him will be taken into the rest of the Kingdom of Heaven.

There follows a rather difficult passage. According to the Ethiopic Jesus says, "For this cause did I descend and spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, your fathers, the prophets, . . . and gave them my right hand, the baptism of life, and release and forgiveness of all evil." This might conceivably mean that the Logos had been present in Old Testament history, or it might be a reference to the descent into Hades, with an obvious resemblance to the Shepherd of Hermas and to the *Acta Pilati*. The Coptic clearly takes the latter view, as instead of mentioning the patriarchs by name it says, "I descended to the place of Lazarus and preached to the righteous and to the prophets that they might come forth." Schmidt thinks that the Coptic is the original text, and this gives him occasion to devote an excursus to the development of the doctrine of the *descensus ad inferos*, controverting Bousset's view that the origin of the doctrine was an ancient popular myth, to which theological justification was afterwards added.⁸

When the disciples heard these revelations they said: "O Lord, blessed are we, for we see thee and hear thee . . . but he answered and said to them, "Blessed rather are they who have not seen and yet have believed, for they shall be called the children of the Kingdom, and I will be their life in the Kingdom of my Father."

⁷ It is unnecessary to point out how closely this resembles Irenaeus.

⁸ Bousset replied in an article which he had passed for press only a few days before his sudden death on March 15. It is published in the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, July 1920, with a note of affectionate farewell from the editor, Erwin Preuschen, who has himself since then passed away. *Requiescant a laboribus suis, opera enim illorum sequuntur illos.*

The apostles are then told to go and preach to the twelve tribes, and to the heathen, and to the whole land of Israel throughout the world. While they are doing this they will meet a man whose name is Saul, which means Paul. The passage is so important that I quote it exactly.

And behold, ye shall meet a man whose name is Saul, which means Paul. He is a Jew, circumcised according to the Law. And he shall hear my voice from heaven with terror and fright and trembling. And his eyes shall be blinded, and by your hand shall the shadow of the cross fall on his eyes. Do to him all that I did to you. Pass it on to the others. And at the same time shall the eyes of that man be opened, and he shall praise the Lord, my Father in Heaven. He shall gain power with the people and preach and teach. And many, when they hear him, shall find joy and be saved. And because of this, men shall be angry and deliver him into the hands of his enemies, and he shall bear witness before earthly kings, and his end shall be that he acknowledge me, instead of having persecuted me. He shall preach and teach and abide with the elect, a chosen vessel, and a wall which nothing overthrows. The least of all shall be for a preacher to the people, perfected through the will of my Father. As ye have also learned through the Scriptures that your fathers, the prophets, spoke concerning me, and in me is the prophecy actually fulfilled. And he said to us, 'Ye shall be guides to them and tell them everything that I have told you and that ye wrote about me — that I am the Word of the Father and that the Father is in me. So shall ye be to that man as ye ought. Teach him and remind him of the things that are spoken of me in the Scriptures and have been fulfilled, and he will hereafter lead the people to salvation.'

And we asked him, "Oh master, is there one and the same hope on earth for us and for them?" He answered and said to us, "Are the fingers of the hand like each other, or the ears of corn in the fields, or do the fruit trees bear the same kind of fruit? Does not each fruit grow after its own kind?" And we said to him, "O Lord, wilt thou speak to us again in parables?" Then said he to us, "Grieve not; verily I say unto you, ye are my brothers, my companions in the Kingdom of Heaven with my Father, for so it hath pleased him. Verily I say unto you, to them also whom ye teach and who therefore believe on me will I send the same hope."

And we asked him again, "When shall we meet that man, and when wilt thou bring him to thy Father and our God and Lord?" He answered and said unto us, "That man shall come out of the land of Cilicia near Damascus in Syria, to root up the churches which it is commanded you to plant. I am he who speaks through you, and he shall come quickly. And he shall become strong in that belief, that the word of the prophet may be fulfilled which says, 'Behold, out of Syria will I begin to call together a new Jerusalem, and Sion will I conquer, and it shall be imprisoned, and the place which is childless shall be called the son and daughter of my Father, and my bride,' for so hath it pleased him who sent me. But that man will I turn away that he may not accomplish his wicked purpose, and through him my Father's praise shall be perfected. But after I go away and tarry with my Father, I will speak to

him from heaven, and all the things will take place of which I told you before in regard to him."

In chapter 34, the apostles ask what will be the signs of the end of the world, and Jesus replies that he will tell them what will happen to them and to their converts, and also to the converts of Paul. What follows, however, is merely a repetition of the conventional apocalyptic scenery, in which no special historical facts can be distinguished, and in chapter 41 a new question is raised. Jesus tells the apostles to go and preach, and they reply, "O Lord, thou art our Father," to which he appears to rejoin that they are all fathers, servants (or possibly deacons), teachers. The disciples object that Jesus himself had said, "Call no one on earth Father or Teacher," but Jesus explains that as soon as they make converts they really become fathers or teachers. Seeing that the *Epistola* appears to be directed against Cerinthus, it is interesting to notice that according to one tradition, though not the earliest, Cerinthus quoted this verse as an argument against Pauline Christianity.⁹ Schmidt believes that the "Judaist" Cerinthus is a figment; but this is one of the points where the questions which he raises call for further study.

Jesus then summarizes his teaching by a new interpretation of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. The five wise are Faith, Love, Joy, Peace and Hope. These are the guides of believers, but the foolish virgins are Understanding, Knowledge, Obedience, Patience, and Pity. These virtues have slumbered among those who have believed on the Lord but not practised his commandments. The interpretation is not wholly logical, but only those who have never interpreted a parable will find both reason and right to throw stones at it on this ground.

⁹ Καὶ ταύτην μαρτυρίαν φέρουσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου πάλιν λέγοντες ὅτι ἀρκετὸν τῷ μαθητῇ ἵνα γένηται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος. τί οὖν; φησί, περιετμήθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς, περιτμήθητι καὶ αὐτός. Χριστὸς κατὰ νόμον, φησίν, ἐπολιτεύσατο, καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ἴσα ποιήσων. ὅθεν καὶ τινες ἐκ τούτων ὡς ὑπὸ δηλητηρίων ὑφαρπαχθέντες πείθονται ταῖς πιθανολογίαις διὰ τὸ τὸν Χριστὸν περιτετμήσθαι. Epiph. xxviii, 5, 1 f. Cf. also Αὐχοῦσι δὲ πάλιν περιτομὴν ἔχοντες . . . καὶ δῆτα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν σύστασιν ταύτης βούλονται φέρειν, ὡς καὶ οἱ περὶ Κήρινθον. φασὶ γὰρ καὶ οὗτοι κατὰ τὸν ἐκείνων ληρώδη λόγον, ἀρκετὸν τῷ μαθητῇ εἶναι ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος. περιετμήθη, φησίν, ὁ Χριστός, καὶ σὺ περιτμήθητι. Epiph. xxx. 26, 1 f.

After a little more exhortation, the document ends as follows:

When he had said this and had finished his discourse with us, he said to us again, "Lo, on the third day and in the third hour will he come who sent me, that I may depart with him." And while he thus spoke, there was thunder and lightning and an earthquake, and the heaven opened and there appeared a cloud which took him up. And there was heard the voice of many angels rejoicing and giving praise and saying, "Gather us together, O Priest, to the light of glory." And as he reached the sky, we heard his voice, "Go in peace."

The translation of the Ethiopic and Coptic with full critical notes take up 130 pages of Schmidt's book; to this he has added another 600 pages of comment. Many of these pages raise controversial points, and naturally difference of opinion will be wide spread, but no one is likely to think that Schmidt has written too much. On the contrary, there are many places where the reader would be glad to have had further comment.

His principal discussion covers the usual introduction to the problems, divided into eleven sections, of which the last deals with the place and time of the *Epistola*; and the reader who has had some experience of German *Wissenschaft* will prefer to read this first, for among its many virtues, German *Wissenschaft* has never quite learned what the French know so well, that the order of presentation usually reverses the order of research. The result is that with almost every book of this kind it is necessary to read it twice if one has followed the order of the writer. The whole is, in point of fact, a closely connected argument which cannot fully be followed until we know what the writer believes that he can prove. In the light of this knowledge everything becomes clear, but it is not revealed until the end of this treatise. It may be submitted that even in dealing with an apocalypse this economy of revelation is undesirable.

The position which Schmidt reaches is that the *Epistola* does not come originally from Egypt but from Asia Minor, and that it belongs to the second century. These two points are not, I think, equally certain. The date is more certain than the locality. The main point which bears on the date is, of course, the statement that the second advent will take place in the year

120 after Christ, which from the context seems to mean 120 years after the Resurrection. This is the date given by the Coptic; the Ethiopic puts 150 instead of 120, which seems to be an attempt to give the date in terms of a chronology beginning from the birth of Christ, but even if the Ethiopic be the correct text, a document, belonging to the year 180 in our reckoning is a sufficiently valuable discovery. In general there can be little doubt but that before 180 is the latest date to which the *Epistola* can be referred, and before 150 seems to me more probable.¹⁰

So far as locality is concerned the argument is less convincing, though it is, I think, possibly correct. The points which stand out as really remarkable are the reference to Cerinthus and the curious list of the apostles.

Schmidt has a long excursus on Cerinthus and the Alogi, in which he controverts Edward Schwartz, who in 1914 had argued that the tradition of Irenaeus linking Cerinthus with Ephesus was quite untrustworthy.^{10a} Schmidt endeavors to refute Schwartz and re-establish the old tradition, incidentally dealing at length with the question of the Alogi. In this he may be right, and it is perhaps more probable that Cerinthus belongs at Ephesus than elsewhere, but the whole question may well be re-opened. Whether, however, he is right in thinking that Cerinthus cannot have been a Judaist is more doubtful, and the whole question is still full of difficulties. Was it impossible for a man to be a Judaizer and a Docetist at the same time? Before this question can be answered we shall be brought back once more to the problem whether Ignatius in his epistles was attacking one party or two.

The connection of Cerinthus with Ephesus and of the *Epistola* with Cerinthus is the main argument which Schmidt brings forward, but he also attaches great weight to the fact that the *Epistola* commands the celebration of the Passover in commemoration of the death of Christ, and connects this with the Quartodecimans of Asia.

¹⁰ Can Papias have been referring to the *Epistola* when he expressed his famous preference for oral tradition to that which was written?

^{10a} *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1914, pp. 210 ff.

All these arguments are weighty so far as they go. They are convincing evidence that Ephesus is a possible place. The main reason why I hesitate to go all the way is the curious list of the apostles. The list is as follows: "We, John, Thomas, Peter, Andrew, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Nathanael, Judas Zelotes, and Cephas." There is extant another list which has many of the same characteristics, that is to say it begins with John, and includes Cephas as well as Peter, found in the Apostolic Church Orders, commonly called KO,¹¹ (*Kirchen-Ordnung*), a book which almost certainly belongs to Egypt and the third century. Schmidt thinks that the KO borrowed the list from the Epistola and that this is based on a scrutiny of the Fourth Gospel. He thinks that the variation of order between the two is irrelevant. To this I cannot agree: the difference seems to me to show that the two lists are independent, though belonging to the same tradition, and one different from that of the Synoptic Gospels. Moreover Schmidt takes too little notice of the fact that Clement of Alexandria also regards Cephas as distinct from Peter, though he places him among the Seventy and not among the Twelve. Thus Clement, the Epistola, and the KO agree in believing that there was a Cephas other than Peter. John 1, 43 alone distinctly says that Cephas is a name which was given to Simon and that it means "Peter," and that Simon, Cephas, and Peter are only three names for one person.¹²

Does this really point to Egypt or Ephesus as the home of the Epistola? Obviously, I think, to Egypt. If the writer had been basing his list wholly on the Fourth Gospel would he have disregarded John 1, 43? Moreover, is such disregard probable in Ephesus of all places? Therefore it becomes more important to consider Schmidt's view that Cerinthus had only a local importance. This seems to me very doubtful as the amount of space devoted to him by Epiphanius and the other later writers is not consistent with a merely local reputation. The whole question requires careful investigation. Schmidt

¹¹ The list in KO runs as follows: John, Matthew, Peter, Andrew, Philip, Simon, James, Nathanael, Thomas, Cephas, Bartholomew.

¹² See the Note, "Simon, Cephas, Peter," below, p. 95.

may well be right in thinking that Hippolytus introduced the reference to Egypt in his account of Cerinthus, and that Harvey¹³ was wrong to emend the text of Irenaeus; but is it so certain that the Egyptian tradition of Hippolytus was pure invention? If there be any foundation for Hippolytus' statement, Schmidt's argument would be greatly reduced in importance.

Schmidt thinks that the writer of the *Epistola* was acquainted with the canonical New Testament at least so far as the Four Gospels, the Acts, and the Pauline Epistles are concerned, and he rejects the use of any uncanonical source. In general the smallest resemblance satisfies him that a canonical book is used and the greatest difference is insufficient to persuade him that an uncanonical gospel was before the writer of the *Epistola*. Nevertheless it is indisputable that the writer lived in an uncanonical atmosphere. The majority of his quotations from the Prophets are *agrapha*, and the clearest reference to a "childhood" narrative is found only in apocryphal gospels.¹⁴

No doubt it is true that there has sometimes been a tendency to invent unnecessary "ausserkanonische" sources, but Schmidt seems to fall over backwards in his fear of this tendency. His main point is that the events mentioned are found in the canonical Gospels and Acts, though with considerable variation: why should not the writer of the *Epistola* have himself introduced the variation? The answer is that the *Epistola* is fictitious, but not fraudulent. In its references to history it is not attempting to give new and unheard of versions of facts, but to corroborate true teaching — which really represented the mind of the Apostles — by relating the prophecy by Jesus of facts which the readers would recognize as having really taken place. Therefore the description of history in the *Epistola* is not likely to represent variation due to the writer,

¹³ Irenaeus says *Et Cerinthus autem quidam in Asia . . . docuit*, but Hippolytus, who is otherwise obviously copying Irenaeus, says *Κήρυθος δὲ τις αὐτὸς Αἰγυπτίων παιδείᾳ ἀσκηθεὶς ἔλεγεν κ. τ. λ.* Harvey therefore proposed to emend *in Asia* to *in Aegypto*, and treats Cerinthus as an Egyptian.

¹⁴ In chapter 4 the *Epistola* obviously refers to the Gospel of Thomas, or one of the cognate gospels, in the course of the discussion between Jesus and a Rabbi as to the meaning of Alpha and Beta.

but rather to be the form of tradition followed by the church in which he lived.

The most obvious instances of this are the possible references to Acts in the *Epistola*. There are two of importance. In chapters 7-8 there is the following account of the release of one of the disciples from prison: "After my home-going to the Father, remember my death. When the Passover comes round, one of you will have been thrown into prison for my name's sake, and will be in sorrow and distress because ye celebrate the Passover while he is in prison and far from you; then will he grieve because he does not celebrate the Passover with you. But I will send my power in the form of the angel Gabriel, and it will open the gates of the prison. He shall go out and come to you, and shall keep the vigil with you and stay with you until the cock crows. But when ye have finished the memorial which takes place in remembrance of me, and the agape, he shall be thrown into prison again as a witness until he shall come out from there and preach what I have commanded you."

Schmidt thinks that this is a reference to the release of Peter from prison in Acts 12. Possibly this may be the ultimate source. But after all, in Acts Peter (who is not mentioned in this section of the *Epistola*) stays out of prison when he is released, and there is no mention of an Agape or Passover in the house to which he went. In the *Epistola* the important thing is that an unnamed apostle is let out of prison by Gabriel in order to eat the Passover with the rest of the Twelve, and is taken back at cock-crow to his cell. It is not quite clearly stated that Gabriel takes him back to prison, but it seems to be implied.

Equally difficult to reconcile with the direct use of the Acts of the Apostles is the account of the conversion of Paul. This has been quoted already. Is it possible that an account so greatly modified could have been put forward as a prophecy of which the account in Acts was to be regarded as the fulfilment, and is it likely that the man who wrote it was acquainted with the Epistle to the Galatians?

The general characteristics of the *Epistola* are admirably

brought out by Schmidt in his paragraphs on the Christology and other doctrinal points of the document. The supreme God remains, as it were, always in the background, and Jesus is the incarnate Logos, the second God of the Apologists, who is the divine centre of the Church, the Lord of the Christians, to whom he offers eternal life in the Kingdom of God. There is a noticeable absence of any importance attached to the death of Jesus, and the only value of the Death and Passion is to prove the true humanity obtained by the Incarnation. This is undoubtedly the Christology and Soteriology of the Apologists, and belongs to the same category as the Fourth Gospel, which it also resembles in anti-Docetic tendency.

There is, however, one point of great importance scarcely touched on by Schmidt: — the bearing of the *Epistola* on the position of Pauline Christianity. His omission to treat this question fully is the more remarkable in view of his selection of Ephesus as the home of the *Epistola*, and the problem can best be stated on the assumption that Schmidt is right on this point; it is only somewhat less striking if he be wrong.

One of the most certain facts in early Christian history is that Paul preached for a long time at Ephesus. Equally certain is the fact that he had many opponents. And a little later on, when we get the beginning of Ephesian tradition, the central figure is not Paul but John. Whether this John was the son of Zebedee or not is entirely unimportant compared with the fact that he, not Paul, is the centre of Ephesian tradition. With him are linked up the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles. The problem is, did this Johannine Christianity grow out of Pauline preaching or was it an independent growth? The general history of early Christianity tends to show that, though Baur exaggerated his application of the Hegelian formula, it is true that in several instances struggle was succeeded by reconciliation, and that much of the existing canonical literature belongs to the period of reconciliation which told the story of the past not as it really was, but as it was felt that it ought to have been. If this were so at Ephesus we should expect to find that after a period of struggle between Pauline and Johannine Christianity terms of peace were unconsciously ar-

ranged and are reflected in the pseudepigraphical literature of the next generation. On this hypothesis the *Epistola* is easily intelligible: it belongs to a party which is Johannine, not Pauline, but no longer wishes to defeat the Pauline party which it recognizes as its complement. To do this it emphasises the truth of the story, which Paul himself had so indignantly denied, that his commission came from Jerusalem. The Johannine tradition claims to represent the Twelve, but John, and not Peter, is their head. These Christians recognize that Paul had done good work, and accept, as it were, the validity of his converts, but they are not Pauline, and their greatest concession is that the church of the Twelve and that of Paul are united as the fingers on one hand.

It is greatly to be desired that as many students of early Christian literature as possible should study the *Epistola*. Their results will probably be instructively diverse, but they will agree in gratitude to Schmidt for his admirable presentation of the text and learned discussion of its problems.